urgently so as to ensure that the multilateral trading system results in mutual benefits for all countries." It was also stated that "developing countries need policy flexibility to support and promote their enterprises, investments in production and marketing, and export expansion and diversification." Besides on the side lines of the UNCTAD meetings, bilateral and plurilateral meetings were held to evolve a common stand with like minded group of countries on the various WTO issues especially to garner their support for rejecting the linkage of trade with labour.

(c) The Government will continue with their efforts to build up solidarity with the other like minded group of countries with a view to evolving a united stand on important issues at various world fora including at WTO.

Advice of National Advisory Committee on International Trade

1844. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Natioal Advisory Committee on International Trade has advised the Commerce and Industry Ministry to prioritise India's interests before resumption of WTO talks;

(b) if so, will Government be utilising this available time towards building solidarity among developing nations so that inclusion of non trade issues on WTO agenda could be opposed; and

(c) what efforts have been made with result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) During the sixth meeting of the Advisory Committee on International Trade held on 3rd February, 2000, the post-Seattle scenario was reviewed and the possible policy options for India were analysed. The Committee fully endorsed India's stand as taken at Seattle and requested the Government to continue to effectively project India's interests at WTO while resisting the inclusion of non trade issues in the WTO agenda. In this regard, the Government will continue their efforts of building up solidarity with the other like minded group of countries with a view to facilitate the projection of Indian interest and oppose the inclusion of non trade issues on the WTO agenda.

(c) As post Seattle efforts, India actively participated in the Tenth Session of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) held at Bangkok, from 12—19 February, 2000, wherein a Plan of Action was adopted

which incorporates the majority of issues of concern to the developing countries. Besides several bilateral and some select group country meetings were held on the side lines of the UNCTAD meetings at Bangkok to garner their support for Indian stand on various issues at WTO.

Threat to Self-Sufficiency in Food

1845. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the hard earned self sufficiency in food is now threatened in view of withdrawing the quantitative restrictions on trade and subsequent unrestricted dumping of cheap foodgrains by the developed countries in the Indian market; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to take in this situation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) The phased removal of quantitative restrictions as are being maintained by Indian under Balance of Payment (BoP) grounds, including on some agricultural products has to be effected by 1.4.2001 in order to implement the rulings and recommendations of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) of the World Trade Organisation, which held that India was no longer justified in maintaining quantitative restrictions on imports on balance of payment grounds. However, adequate protection to the interests of farmers can be provided through appropriate adjustments in tariffs. Besides, necessary trade protection measures such as imposition of anti-dumping duties, safeguard actions or antisubsidy countervailing actions can be taken under specified circumstances. India has also been highlighting its concerns regarding food security and rural employment in the context of mandated negotiations under WTO Agreement on Agriculture.

Export of Marine Products from Kerala

1846. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of COM MERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) has extended its activities to Kerala; and

(b) if so, the contribution made by MPEDA to increase the exports of marine products from the State?